



Tantra

(The Worship of Shakti)

All India Magazine

October 2015

Everywhere the Mother is at work; from Her mighty and shaping hands enormous forms of Rakshasas, Asuras, Devas are leaping forth into the arena of the world. We have seen the slow but mighty rise of great empires in the West, we have seen the swift, irresistible and impetuous bounding into life of Japan. Some are Mleccha Shaktis clouded in their strength, black or blood-crimson with tamas or rajas, others are Arya Shaktis, bathed in a pure flame of renunciation and utter self-sacrifice: but all are the Mother in Her new phase, remoulding, creating. She is pouring Her spirit into the old; She is whirling into life the new.

CWSA 6: 80

Sri Aurobindo

Cover Painting by Ritam Upadhyaya

Flower depicted on the cover painting

Dynamic Power

Indispensable for progress.

(Spiritual significance and explanation given by the Mother)

Botanical name: Hibiscus rosa-sinensis

The excerpts from the Works of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother published in *All India Magazine* carry titles and captions chosen by the editor, highlighting the theme of the excerpts.

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Matter shall reveal the Spirit's face. — Sri Aurobindo

Tantra (The Worship of Shakti)

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Editorial Note: *This compilation on 'Tantra' needs to be read with a word of caution. First and foremost, it is far from being exhaustive and though effort has been made to touch upon different aspects of Tantra, it is not possible to provide anything but a broad overview and a brief essence. Secondly though certain elements of Tantra are there as part of Sri Aurobindo's Yoga, such as opening to the Divine Mother and Her central role in this Yoga, it should not be taken to mean that Sri Aurobindo's yoga is a Tantric Yoga. Thirdly some of the passages have to be seen in their context for example the portions from Evening Talks. Similarly, the section on 'Shakti Upasana' from Page 19 to 25 are part of a set of writings which were published under the title of 'Yogic Sadhan' with the author's name being given as 'Uttara Yogi'. Uttara Yogi was of course Sri Aurobindo himself and the name was in keeping with the prediction by another yogi 'Nagai Japta' who had foreseen the coming of Sri Aurobindo to Pondicherry from the north. Sri Aurobindo wrote an epilogue while publishing it, the last bit of which is being reproduced on page 25 at the end of the section.*



Hymn to the Goddess

The cause and Mother of the world,
She whose form is that of the Shabdabrahman,
And whose substance is bliss.



Thou art the primordial One,
Mother of countless creatures,
Creatrix of the bodies of the Lotus-born, Vishnu and Shiva,
Who creates, preserves and destroys the worlds. . . .

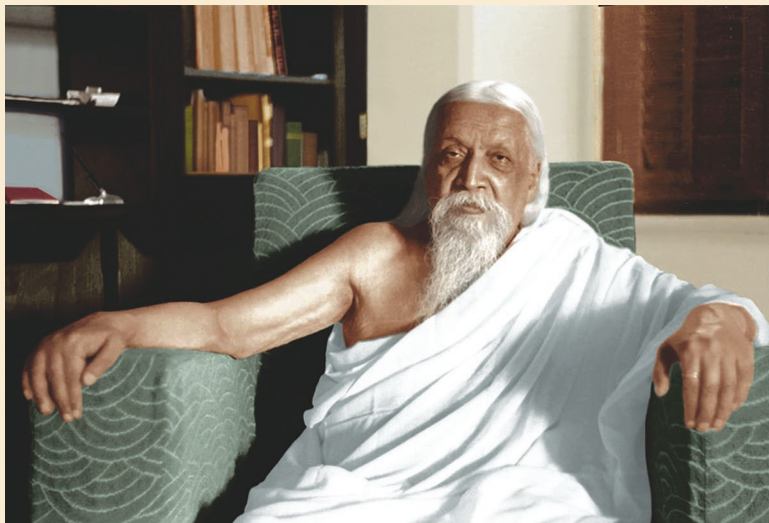
Although Thou art the primordial cause of the world,
Yet art Thou ever youthful.
Although Thou art the Daughter of the Mountain-King,
Yet art Thou full of tenderness.
Although Thou art the Mother of the Vedas,
Yet they cannot describe Thee.
Although men must meditate upon Thee,
Yet cannot their mind comprehend Thee.

This hymn is quoted as culled from a Tantric compilation, the Tantrasara. Its opening is full of the supreme meaning of the great Devi symbol, its close is an entire self-abandonment to the adoration of the body of the Mother. This catholicity is typical of the whole Tantric system, which is in its aspiration one of the greatest attempts yet made to embrace the whole of God manifested and unmanifested in the adoration, self-discipline and knowledge of a single human soul.

CWSA 1: 574-75

Sri Aurobindo





The Philosophy and Principle behind Tantra

The central principle of Tantra

If, however, we leave aside, here also, the actual methods and practices and seek for the central principle, we find, first, that Tantra expressly differentiates itself from the Vedic methods of Yoga. In a sense, all the schools we have hitherto examined are Vedantic in their principle; their force is in knowledge, their method is knowledge, though it is not always discernment by the intellect, but may be, instead, the knowledge of the heart expressed in love and faith or a knowledge in the will working out through action. In all of them the lord of the Yoga is the Purusha, the Conscious Soul that knows, observes, attracts, governs. But in Tantra it is rather Prakriti, the Nature-Soul, the Energy, the Will-in-Power executive in the universe. It was by learning and applying the intimate secrets of this Will-in-Power, its method, its Tantra, that the Tantric Yogi pursued the aims of his discipline, — mastery, perfection, liberation, beatitude. Instead of drawing back from manifested Nature and its difficulties, he confronted them, seized and conquered.

But in the end, as is the general tendency of Prakriti, Tantric Yoga largely lost its principle in its machinery and became a thing of formulae and occult mechanism still powerful when rightly used but fallen from the clarity of their original intention.

CWSA 23: 42-43

Vedanta and Tantra: Two Sides of the One Truth

Veda and Vedanta are one side of the one Truth; Tantra with its emphasis on Shakti is another. In this Yoga all sides of the Truth are taken up, not in the systematic forms given them formerly, but in their essence and carried to the fullest and highest significance. But Vedanta deals more with the principles and essentials of the divine knowledge and therefore much of its spiritual knowledge and experience has been taken bodily into the *Arya*. Tantra deals more with forms and processes and organised powers — all these could not be taken as they were, for the integral Yoga needs to develop its own forms and processes, but the ascent of the consciousness through the centres and other Tantrik knowledge are there behind the process of transformation to which so much importance is given by me — also the truth that nothing can be done except through the force of the Mother.

SABCL 22: 72-73; CWSA 29: 459

The two paths of Tantra

We observe, first, that there still exists in India a remarkable Yogic system which is in its nature synthetical and starts from a great central principle of Nature, a great dynamic force of Nature; but it is a Yoga apart, not a synthesis of other schools. This system is the way of the Tantra. Owing to certain of its developments Tantra has fallen into discredit with those who are not Tantrics; and especially owing to the developments of its left-hand path, the Vama Marga, which not content with exceeding the duality of virtue and sin and instead of replacing them by spontaneous rightness of action seemed, sometimes, to make a method of self

indulgence, a method of unrestrained social immorality. Nevertheless, in its origin, Tantra was a great and puissant system founded upon ideas which were at least partially true. Even its twofold division into the right-hand and left-hand paths, Dakshina Marga and Vama Marga, started from a certain profound perception. In the ancient symbolic sense of the words Dakshina and Vama, it was the distinction between the way of Knowledge and the way of Ananda, — Nature in man liberating itself by right discrimination in power and practice of its own energies, elements and potentialities and Nature in man liberating itself by joyous acceptance in power and practice of its own energies, elements and potentialities. But in both paths there was in the end an obscuration of principles, a deformation of symbols and a fall.

SABCL 6: 37-38; CWSA 23: 42-43

The Central Tantric Conception

We have in this central Tantric conception one side of the truth, the worship of the Energy, the Shakti, as the sole effective force for all attainment. We get the other extreme in the Vedantic conception of the Shakti as a power of Illusion and in the search after the silent inactive Purusha as the means of liberation from the deceptions created by the active Energy. But in the integral conception the Conscious Soul is the Lord, the Nature-Soul is his executive Energy. Purusha is of the nature of Sat, the being of conscious self-existence pure and infinite; Shakti or Prakriti is of the nature of Chit, — it is power of the Purusha's self-conscious existence, pure and infinite. The relation of the two exists between the poles of rest and action. When the Energy is absorbed in the bliss of conscious self-existence, there is rest; when the Purusha pours itself out in the action of its Energy, there is action, creation and the enjoyment or Ananda of becoming. But if Ananda is the creator and begetter of all becoming, its method is Tapas or force of the Purusha's consciousness dwelling upon its own infinite potentiality in existence and producing from it

truths of conception or real Ideas, *vijñDna*, which, proceeding from an omniscient and omnipotent Self-existence, have the surety of their own fulfilment and contain in themselves the nature and law of their own becoming in the terms of mind, life and matter. The eventual omnipotence of Tapas and the infallible fulfilment of the Idea are the very foundation of all Yoga. In man we render these terms by Will and Faith, — a will that is eventually self-effective because it is of the substance of Knowledge and a faith that is the reflex in the lower consciousness of a Truth or real Idea yet unrealised in the manifestation. It is this self-certainty of the Idea which is meant by the Gita when it says, *yo yac-chraddhaU sa eva saU*, “whatever is a man’s faith or the sure Idea in him, that he becomes.”

SABCL 20: 39; CWSA 23: 44

Sri Aurobindo

Worshipping the Woman as goddess

VidyDU samastD stava devi bhedDU

StriyaU samastDU sakalD jagatsu.

“All sciences, O Goddess, are different parts of thee, all women entirely in the worlds.” The sense would then be that wherever the feminine principle is found in the living personality, we have the entire presence of the world-supporting maternal soul of the Divinity. The Devi with all her aspects, *kalDs*, is there in the Woman; in the Woman we have to see Durga, Annapurna, Tara, the Mahavidyas, and therefore it is said in the Tantra, in the line quoted by Mr. Avalon in his preface, “Wherever one sees the feet of Woman, one should give worship in one’s soul even as to one’s guru.” Thus this thought of the Shakta side of Hinduism becomes an uncompromising declaration of the divinity of woman completing the Vedantic declaration of the concealed divinity in man which we are too apt to treat in practice as if it applied only in the masculine. We put away in silence, even when we do not actually deny it, the perfect equality in difference of the double manifestation.

CWSA 1: 571

Sri Aurobindo



ॐ आनन्दमायि चैतन्यमायि सत्यमायि परमै
OM anandamayi chaitanyemayi
satyamayi parama

* * *

The Mother's Symbol



The Kundalini Shakti

Awakening the coiled Yoga-Shakti

Q: Sweet Mother, here it is written: “There is a Yoga-Shakti lying coiled or asleep...” How can it be awakened?

...it awakens quite naturally the moment one takes the resolution to do the yoga. If the resolution is sincere and one has an aspiration, it wakes up by itself.

In fact, it is perhaps its awakening which gives the aspiration to do yoga.

It is possible that it is a result of the Grace... or after some conversation or reading, something that has suddenly given you the idea and aspiration to know what yoga is and to practise it. Sometimes just a simple conversation with someone is enough or a passage one reads from a book; well, it awakens this Yoga-Shakti and it is this which makes you do your yoga.

One is not aware of it at first — except that something has changed in our life, a new decision is taken, a turning.

CWM 7: 101

Q: What is it, this Yoga-Shakti, Sweet Mother?

It is the energy of progress. It is the energy which makes you do the yoga, precisely, makes you progress — consciously. It is a conscious energy.

In fact, the Yoga-Shakti is the power to do yoga.

Q: Sweet Mother, isn't it more difficult to draw the divine forces from below?

I think it is absolutely useless.

Some people think that there are more reserves of energy — I have heard this very often: a great reserve of energy — in the

earth, and that if they draw this energy into themselves they will be able to do things; but it is always mixed.

CWM 7: 101

Q: How can one awaken his Yoga-shakti?

It depends on this: when one thinks that it is the most important thing in his life. That's all.

Some people sit in meditation, concentrate on the base of the vertebral column and want it very much to awake, but that's not enough. It is when truly it becomes the most important thing in one's life, when all the rest seems to have lost all taste, all interest, all importance, when one feels within that one is born for this, that one is here upon earth for this, and that it is the only thing that truly counts, then that's enough.

One can concentrate on the different centres; but sometimes one concentrates for so long, with so much effort, and has no result. And then one day something shakes you, you feel that you are going to lose your footing, you have to cling on to something; then you cling within yourself to the idea of union with the Divine, the idea of the divine Presence, the idea of the transformation of the consciousness, and you aspire, you want, you try to organise your feelings, movements, impulses around this. And it comes.

Some people have recommended all kinds of methods; probably these were methods which had succeeded in their case; but to tell the truth, one must find one's own method, it is only after having done the thing that one knows how it should be done, not before.

If one knows it beforehand, one makes a mental construction and risks greatly living in his mental construction, which is an illusion; because when the mind builds certain conditions and then they are realised, there are many chances of there being mostly pure mental construction which is not the experience itself but its

image. So for all these truly spiritual experiences I think it is wiser to have them before knowing them. If one knows them, one imitates them, one doesn't have them, one imagines oneself having them; whereas if one knows nothing — how things are and how they ought to happen, what should happen and how it will come about — if one knows nothing about all this, then by keeping very still and making a kind of inner sorting out within one's being, one can suddenly have the experience, and then later knows what one has had. It is over, and one knows how it has to be done when one has done it — afterwards. Like that it is sure.

One may obviously make use of his imagination, imagine the Kundalini and try to pull it upwards. But one can also tell himself tales like this. I have had so many instances of people who described their experiences to me exactly as they are described in books, knowing all the words and putting down all the details, and then I asked them just a little question like that, casually: that if they had had the experience they should have known or felt a certain thing, and as this was not in the books, they could not answer.

CWM 7: 208-09

True experience of awakening and a mental construction

This phenomenon is very real, concrete, it is felt with all the reality and intensity of even a physical phenomenon. But each person describes it with a form particular to himself, except as I say, when he has read and studied, and his brain is full of all that is written in books; then automatically what he has read gives a form to his experience, and this takes away from it something of the spontaneity which gives such an impression of being sincere and truthful; it becomes a mental construction. If you have read and read much that it is like a serpent which is coiled up, well, quite naturally when you concentrate and try to awaken it, you see a serpent which is coiled, because you think about it like that. If you

are told about a thousand-petalled lotus, you see a thousand petalled lotus. But it is a mental superimposition upon the fact of the experience itself. But the feeling of something that's innumerable, that's one and innumerable at the same time, and that kind of impression of something opening, awakening, beginning to vibrate, responding to the forces and giving you an intensity of light, of understanding, of opening to higher regions, this is... the substance of the experience. Yet when you begin to describe it with images which you have found in books, it is as though suddenly you were making it either superficial — fossilised, so to say — or artificial or even insincere.

CWM 7: 210

Q: Then, Mother, this means that it is better not to read?

On condition that one truly has within himself the ardour of aspiration. If you are born for this, for the yoga, and this is the thing which dominates all your existence, that you feel, yes, before knowing anything, that you need to find something which is in you, then sometimes a word is enough, a conversation which simply orients you—it is enough. But for those who are seeking, who grope, who are not absolutely sure, who are pulled this way and that, have many interests in life, are not steady, stabilised in their will for realisation, it is very good to read, because it puts them in touch with the subject, it gives them some interest in the thing.

CWM 7: 211

The Chakras or the Centres

In the process of our Yoga the centres have each a fixed psychological use and general function which base all their special powers and functionings. The *mulDdhDra* governs the physical down to the subconscious; the abdominal centre — *svDdhiFhDna* — governs the lower vital; the navel centre — *nDbhipadma* or *maKipura* — governs

the larger vital; the heart centre — *hrtpadma* or *anDhata* — governs the emotional being; the throat centre — *vi0uddha* — governs the expressive and externalising mind; the centre between the eyebrows—*DjñDcakra* — governs the dynamic mind, will, vision, mental formation; the thousand-petalled lotus — *sahasradala* — above commands the higher thinking mind, houses the still higher illumined mind and at its highest opens to the intuition through which or else by an overflowing directness the overmind can have with the rest communication or an immediate contact.

*

One can speak of the chakras only in reference to Yoga. In ordinary people the chakras are not open, it is only when they do sadhana that they open. For the chakras are the centres of the inner consciousness and belong organically to the subtle body. So much as is active in ordinary people is very little — for in them it is the outer consciousness that is active.

*

The centres of consciousness [*are meant by the term “centres”*], the chakras. It is by their opening that the Yogic or inner consciousness develops — otherwise you are bound to the ordinary outer consciousness.

*

One does not pass through the psychic centre or any centre [*during the sadhana*]. The centres open under the pressure of the sadhana. You can say that the Force descends or ascends into a centre.

*

The spine is the support of the centres and it is through the spine that in the Tantric sadhana the Kundalini rises.

*

It [*a force in the navel region rising upward in a coiling, pulsating movement*] is what is meant by the Kundalini rising towards the Brahmarandhra — not the whole of it, but something of it is released coiling or circling upward with vibrations (*spandana*) from the *Muladhara*. It is not always felt like that. Sometimes one simply feels currents or a Force of some kind rising up or just an ascending movement of consciousness. But in all cases it is the release of the Yogic consciousness which is shut up in the chakras and its ascent to meet the Divine Consciousness above. It is this and the corresponding descent from above that make Yogic experiences and realisations possible.

*

It [the Kundalini] is the Yogic force asleep in the *Muladhara* and covered up in the other centres by the ordinary consciousness. When it is liberated, it rises up to join the Brahmic (Divine) consciousness above passing through the centres on its way.

CWSA 28: 230

There is no Kundalini Shakti above the head. Above the head is the universal or Divine Consciousness and Force. The Kundalini is the latent power asleep in the chakras.

CWSA 29: 460-61

In the Tantra the centres are opened and Kundalini is awakened by a special process, its action of ascent is felt through the spine. Here it is the pressure of the Force from above that awakens it and opens the centres. There is an ascension of the consciousness going up till it joins the higher consciousness above. This repeats itself (sometimes a descent also is felt) until all the centres are open and the consciousness rises above the body. At a later stage it remains above and widens out into the cosmic consciousness and the universal Self. This is a usual course, but sometimes the process is more rapid and there is a sudden and definite opening above.

*

The Sahasradala or Sahasrara or Crown Centre

The thousand-petalled lotus is above the head. It is the seventh and highest centre.

Usually those who take the centres in the body only, count six centres, the Sahasrara being excluded.

*

It is evidently the sahasradala padma through which the higher intuition, illumined mind and overmind all pass their rays.

*

The sahasradala commands all between the ordinary mind and the supermind — therefore its opening necessarily takes long. But opening by itself only creates a connection or communication — to dwell in that centre, one needs to have overpassed the mind and be able to live mainly in the spiritual self.

*

The Supramental is not organised in the body so there is no separate centre for it; but all that comes from above the Mind uses the Sahasrara for its transit and so opens something there.

*

If the forehead centre opens, it is fairly certain that the crown centre must have opened sufficiently at least to allow the passage of the higher force which is above it. The psychic is a different matter — it stands behind the centres and the time of its opening varies with different people — in fact it is not so much the opening of a centre as the coming forward of the psychic being.

The usual rule in this Yoga is from above downwards. There may be variations in the preparatory stage. There may for instance be a partial opening first of the heart centre. The higher vital centre may become active first also, but that means much struggle and difficulty.

*

The psychic being is behind the heart-centre — the centre between the eyes is that of inner (occult) thought, will and vision. This inner or occult vision is called by ordinary people psychic vision.

*

A third eye does open there [*in the centre of the forehead*] — it represents the occult vision and the occult power which goes with that vision — it is connected with the Ajnachakra.

CWSA 28:230-39

The Seven Centres of the Life

1. The thousand-petalled Lotus above the head with its base on the brain. Basis or support in Life-Mind for the Supramental; initiative centre of the illumined Mind.

2. The centre between the brows in the middle of the forehead. Will, vision, inner mental formation, active and dynamic Mind.

3. The centre in the throat. Speech, external mind, all external expression and formation.

4. The heart-lotus. Externally, the emotional mind, the vital mental: in the inner heart the psychic centre.

5. The navel centre. The larger vital proper; life-force centre.

6. The centre intermediate between the navel and the Muladhara. The lower vital; it connects all the above centres with the physical.

7. The last centre or Muladhara. Material support of the vital; initiation of the physical.

All below is the subconscious physical.

CWSA 11:1343

The Functions of the Chakras or Centres

The centres or Chakras are seven in number —

(1) The thousand-petalled lotus on the top of the head.

(2) In the middle of the forehead — the Ajna Chakra — (will, vi-

sion, dynamic thought).

(3) Throat centre — externalising mind.

(4) Heart-lotus — emotional centre. The psychic is behind it.

(5) Navel — higher vital (proper).

(6) Below navel — lower vital.

(7) Muladhara — physical.

All these centres are in the middle of the body; they are supposed to be attached to the spinal cord; but in fact all these things are in the subtle body, *suklma deha*, though one has the feeling of their activities as if in the physical body when the consciousness is awake.

CWSA 28: 229

Sri Aurobindo



Aditi-the Divine Consciousness

Pure, immaculate, gloriously powerful.

(Spiritual significance and explanation given by the Mother)

Nelumbo nucifera 'Alba'
Sacred lotus, East Indian lotus

Shakti Upasana

‘...Sri Aurobindo permitted the publication of Yogic Sadhan, but he did not consider it his own work. In a letter of 1934 he wrote: ‘The Yogic Sadhan is not Sri Aurobindo’s own writing, but was published with a note by him.’ The last portion of the note is as follows: ‘Finally, the aim of the particular path of Yoga indicated is not the assertion of the individual will, but surrender of the individual will, its absolute, unreserved and ungrudging surrender into the direction and control of the Infinite Being. The training of the system or adhar prescribed has for its purpose, first, the subjugation of the clamorous desires and impulses, the stubborn pride and egoism, the vain self-sufficient reason and imagination of the unregenerate man so that they may not interfere with the completeness of the surrender, secondly, the possession of a strong, mighty and effective will to offer as a yajna to the Most High and not one that is weak, distracted, ignorant and diffident. The Karma of the Siddha Yogin must be like that of the sun and stars, the avalanche and the cyclone, the breeze, moon or flowers, fire and the dust of the earth, either calm and luminous or mighty and violent or gentle, sweet and useful, either lofty or humble at the will of the One Supreme Shakti, impelled and used by Her entirely, and, whatever its outward appearance, always working on a basis of absolute peace, self-surrender and self-knowledge.’

CWSA 10: 1398-99

The Conditions of Power

It should be noted that none of the siddhis of power can act perfectly or freely so long as there is impurity of the chitta, egoism in the thought and temperament or domination of desire in the use of the siddhi. Under such circumstances there may be occasional use & irregular effectivity of the power, a thing not worth having in itself, but useful only in training the mind to give up its own sanskaras & habitual processes & accept the activity of the vijnanamayi shakti; or there may be a regular & effective use of limited powers by fixed Tantric processes (kriyas). The latter should be shunned by the sadhakas of the purna Yoga.

CWSA 10:21-22

The Conditions of Jnana

It should also be noted that perfect jnana and trikaldrishti are only possible by complete shuddhi of the antahkarana, especially the exclusion of desire and vishuddhi of the buddhi, absolute passivity of the manas and, finally, perfected action of the powers of the vijnana. An imperfect & irregular action of these higher powers is always possible & is possessed obscurely by many who are not Yogins or sadhakas.

CWSA 11:22

The proper course of the sadhana in Tantra

The proper course of the Sadhana is just the opposite of the thing most people do and you have also done. People begin with the body and the prana, go on to the chitta and the manas, and finish up with the buddhi and the will. The real course is to start with the will and finish with the body. There is no need of Asana, Pranayama, Kumbhaka, Chittasuddhi, or anything else preparatory or preliminary if one starts with the will. That was what Sri Ramakrishna came to show so far as Yoga is concerned. "Do the Shakti Upasana first," he said, "get Shakti and she will give you Sat." Will and Shakti are the first means necessary to the Yogin. That was why he said always, "Remember you are Brahman," and he gave that as a central message to Swami Vivekananda. You are Ishwara. If you choose, you can be shuddha, siddha and everything else, or, if you choose, you can be just the opposite. The first necessity is to believe in yourself, the second in God and the third to believe in Kali; for these things make up the world. Educate the Will first, through the Will educate the Jnanam, through the Jnanam purify the Chitta, control the Prana and calm the Manas. Through all these instruments immortalise the body. That is the real yoga, the Mahapantha, that is the true and only Tantra. The Vedanta starts with Buddhi, the Tantra with Shakti.

CWSA 11:1371-72

The Shakti is in you

The question is how to start. The Shakti is in you. Let her work and assist her by taking the right attitude. You are the Sakshi, Anumanta, Bhokta, and Bharta. As Anumanta, give the command, as Sakshi watch her work out the result, as Bhokta enjoy the result and as Bharta help her by maintaining the Adhar. Do not ruin it by tamasic udasinata or rajasic revolt. Be sure your Will can never fail to act. You are the Jnata: receive all knowledge that presents itself to you. Adopt the attitude I have described here and apply it to every individual act of the sadhana or of life. You have nothing else to do. Kali will do the rest. Be not troubled, be not anxious, be not in haste, you have all eternity before you, why be in haste? Only do not be tamasic or idly waste your time.

CWSA 11:1372

The Correspondence between the gross and the subtle body

I shall speak to-day of the Shakti or Will, since that is the foundation of Yoga. The Shakti is situated in the Sahasradala just above the crown of the head and from that seat of activity it works. Below it at the top of the brain is the higher Buddhi and below that, occupying the middle level of the brain, is the reason or lower buddhi, and below that, at the bottom of the brain, is the organ of communication with the Manas. We may call this organ the understanding. Knowledge, reason and understanding are the three parts of the brain. These functions are in the subtle body, but they are connected with the corresponding portions of the material brain.

In the chest just above the heart is the Manas, that is, the organ of sensation with its five subordinate Indriyas. Below the Manas, from the heart to midway between the heart and the navel, is the Chitta. From that point up to the navel and below it is the psychic or sukshma prana. All these are in the sukshma deha but connected at these points with the sthula deha. In the sthula deha itself two functions are situated, the physical prana or the nervous system and the

Will is the living master of the body

Now the will is the organ of the Ishwara or living master of the body. It works through all these functions, through the Buddhi for thought and knowledge, through the Manas for sensations, through the Chitta for emotions and through the Prana for enjoyment. When it functions perfectly, working in each organ according to the capacities of the organ, then the work of the Shakti becomes perfect and infallible. But there are two causes of weakness, error and failure. First, the confusion of the organs. If the Prana interferes in sensation, emotion and thought, then a man becomes anisha, the slave of the Prana, that is to say, of the desires. If the Chitta interferes with sensation and thought, then the sensations and thoughts are falsified by the emotions and their corresponding wishes. For instance if love interferes with the Buddhi, the man becomes blind to the truth about the person he loves, he is unable to distinguish between right and wrong, kartavya and akartavya, where the person is concerned. He becomes to a greater or lesser extent the slave of the emotions, love, anger, hatred, pity, revenge etc. So, if the Manas interferes with the reason, the man mistakes his sensations for just ideas or true arguments. He judges by what he sees or hears instead of judging what he sees or hears. If again the reason, imagination, memory and logic interfere with knowledge, the man is debarred from higher knowledge and wanders in the interminable circle of probabilities and possibilities. Finally, if even the Buddhi interferes with the Will, then the man is limited by the power of his limited knowledge, instead of moving nearer to Omnipotence. In brief, if a machine or instrument is used for a work for which it is unfit, for which it was not made or originally adapted, then it either cannot do that work at all or it does it badly; *dharma-sankara* is created. Now what I have described is the ordinary state of men before they gain knowledge. It

is all *dharma-sankara*, confusion of functions, bad administration and incompetent and ignorant government. The Will, the true minister, is rendered a puppet of the lower officials who work each for his own selfish ends, interfering with and hampering each other or dishonestly playing into each other's hands, for their own benefit and to the detriment of the Ishwara, the master. He ceases to be Ishwara, he becomes Anisha, the puppet and dupe of his servants.

Why does he allow it? Because of Ajnanam. He does not know, he does not realise what the ministers and officials and their million and one hangers-on are doing with him. What is this Ajnanam? It is inability to recognise his own true nature, position and authority. He began by being deeply interested in a small portion of his royal activity, the body. He thought "That is my kingdom." He became the tool of his bodily functions. So with the nervous, the sensational, the emotional and the mental, he identifies himself with each of them. He forgets that he is different from them and much greater and stronger. What he must do is to resume the reins of power, to remember that he is Ishwara, the king, the master and God himself. He must on this understanding remember that he is all-powerful. He has a mighty minister, the Will.

CWSA 11: 1373-74

The Tapasya of Will

Let him support and direct the Will and the Will will introduce order into the government and compel the officials each to do obediently and perfectly his own duty. Not of course all at once. It will take time. The officials have become so much used to confused work and misgovernment that at first they will not be willing to work properly and, secondly, even when they wish, they will find it difficult. They hardly know even how to begin. For instance, when you begin to use your will, what is likely to happen? First you will try to use it through the Prana, through desire, wish, hope, or you will use it through the Chitta, with emotion, eagerness and expectation,

or you will use it through the Manas using Cheshta, struggle, effort, as if you were physically wrestling with the thing you want to control; or you will use it through the Buddhi, trying to dominate the subject of your interest by thought, by thinking “Let this be”, “Let that happen” etc. All these methods are used by Yogins to recover the power of the Will. The Hatha-yogin uses the Prana and the body, the Rajayogin the heart, Manas and Buddhi, but the best method is none of these. Even the last of them is a second-best means and must entail struggle, failure and frequent disappointment. The Will is only perfect in its action when it works apart from all these, straight on the subject from the sahasradala, without effort, without emotion and eagerness and without desire. Each function to itself and Will is its own function. It always obeys the Ishwara but it acts in itself and by itself. It uses the rest, it must not be used by them....

But the Will is omnipotent and if patiently, calmly and heroically exercised, will prevail. For the Will, I repeat, is Kali herself. Therefore in the end it establishes by its action new rules, habits or tendencies which fight with and gradually overcome the old. What then happens is that the old, though put down, weakened and no longer a real part of the nature, resist eviction from the adhar. They are supported by an army of forces or spiritual beings who surround you and live upon your experiences and enjoyments. This law of resistance marks the second period of the Yoga and, unless the Will has already become siddha and the adhar shuddha, is very trying and troublesome to the sadhak. For there seems to be no end to the capacity of resistance.

Here again the Will is bound to triumph, if it is supported by faith or knowledge. Even then the evicted habits and tendencies strive continually to re-enter the system and recover their lost seats of power and enjoyment. This is called recurrence. In proportion as the Will is siddha and the Adhar shuddha, the recurrence becomes weaker and less frequent or, when it comes, less prolonged. But in an impure adhar, or with an imperfect Will, the recurrence is often as prolonged and troublesome as the resistance.

On the other hand there are the three favourable laws. When a new habit or tendency is once established, it is the law that it shall develop towards strength and perfection. So long as it is struggling to establish itself, the Yogin may at any time become bhrashta, that is he may from error, weakness or impatience give up the struggle. That is the only fall for the Yogin. Failure, temporary defeat, is not bhramsa, so long as he refuses to give up the struggle. But once the right tendency is established, no man can destroy it, until it has enjoyed supremacy and its bhoga.

CWSA 11: 1374-78

The Shakti of God in man

Still at first, while the Will is comparatively weak or unpractised, the progress must be slow. In proportion as the perfection of the Will brings purity of the Adhar, the progress becomes rapid. Everything in this world is done by a process; a process means a series of actions leading to a particular result by certain recognised stages. These stages may be passed through slowly or swiftly, but so long as the law of gradual processes obtains, all the stages must be successively and consciously passed through. You have so many milestones to pass; but you may pass them walking, in a carriage, in a railway train, but pass them you must. Still by the growing strength of the Will, you can replace slow process by swift process. Then a time comes when Kali begins to transcend the ordinary human limits and becomes no longer the Shakti of a man, but the Shakti of God in man. It is then that gradual processes are replaced by concentrated processes. It is as if, instead of travelling from milestone to milestone you could leap from the first milestone to the third and so on to your journey's end. In other words the process remains the same but some of the stages seem to be dispensed with. In reality they are passed over so lightly as to escape notice and occupy little time. Therefore it is called a concentrated or contracted process.

CWSA 11: 1378

Sri Aurobindo

Integral Yoga and the Tantra

The Synthesis of Vedanta and Tantra in the Integral Yoga

In the method of synthesis which we have been following, another clue of principle has been pursued which is derived from another view of the possibilities of Yoga. This starts from the method of Vedanta to arrive at the aim of the Tantra. In the Tantric method Shakti is all-important, becomes the key to the finding of spirit; in this synthesis spirit, soul is all-important, becomes the secret of the taking up of Shakti. The Tantric method starts from the bottom and grades the ladder of ascent upwards to the summit; therefore its initial stress is upon the action of the awakened Shakti in the nervous system of the body and its centres; the opening of the six lotuses is the opening up of the ranges of the power of Spirit. Our synthesis takes man as a spirit in mind much more than a spirit in body and assumes in him the capacity to begin on that level, to spiritualise his being by the power of the soul in mind opening itself directly to a higher spiritual force and being and to perfect by that higher force so possessed and brought into action the whole of his nature. For that reason our initial stress has fallen upon the utilisation of the powers of soul in mind and the turning of the triple key of knowledge, works and love in the locks of the spirit; the Hathayogic methods can be dispensed with, — though there is no objection to their partial use, — the Rajayogic will only enter in as an informal element. To arrive by the shortest way at the largest development of spiritual power and being and divinise by it a liberated nature in the whole range of human living is our inspiring motive.

CWSA 23: 612-13

Kundalini, the Chakras and the Integral Yoga

The ascension and descent of the Force in this Yoga accomplishes itself in its own way without any necessary reproduction

of the details laid down in the books [*on Tantra*]. Many become conscious of the centres, but others simply feel the ascent or descent in a general way or from level to level rather than from centre to centre, that is to say, the Force descending first to the head, then to the heart, then to the navel and still below. It is not at all necessary to become aware of the deities in the centres according to the Tantrik description, but some feel the Mother in the different centres. In these things our sadhana does not cleave to the knowledge given in the books, but only keeps to the central truth behind and realises it independently without any subjection to the old forms and symbols. The centres themselves have a different interpretation here from that given in the books of the Tantriks. ...

The process of the Kundalini awakened rising through the centres as also the purification of the centres is a Tantrik knowledge. In our Yoga there is no willed process of the purification and opening of the centres, no raising up of the Kundalini by a set process either. Another method is used, but still there is the ascent of the consciousness from and through the different levels to join the higher consciousness above; there is the opening of the centres and of the planes (mental, vital, physical) which these centres command; there is also the descent which is the main key of the spiritual transformation. Therefore there is, I have said, a Tantrik knowledge behind the process of transformation in this Yoga.

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There is [*in the Integral Yoga*] no willed opening of the chakras, they open of themselves by the descent of the Force. In the Tantrik discipline they open from down upwards, the Muladhara first—in our Yoga, they open from up downward. But the ascent of the force from the Muladhara does take place.

*

The ascent of the Kundalini — not its descent, so far as I know — is a recognised phenomenon; there is one that corresponds in our Yoga, the feeling of the consciousness ascending from the vital or

physical to meet the higher consciousness. This is not necessarily through the chakras but is often felt in the whole body. Similarly the descent of the higher consciousness is not felt necessarily or usually through the chakras but as occupying the whole head, neck, chest, abdomen, body.

CWSA 29: 459-60

Sri Aurobindo

The necessity for mastery of the sexual impulse

Disciple : In our yoga we have to discontinue the lower movement of nature as being an obstacle to Sadhana, but the Tantrics – specially the Vira Sadhakas – turn these obstacles to account and, taking help from these, they build up spiritual life.

Sri Aurobindo : In itself the sexual act is not bad as the moralists believe. It is a movement of nature which has its purpose and is neither good nor bad. But, from the yogic point of view, the sexual force is the greatest force in the world and if properly used helps to recreate and regenerate the being. But, if it is indulged in the ordinary way, it is a great obstacle for two reasons. First, the sexual act involves a great loss of vital force, it is a movement towards death, though this is compensated by creation of new life.

That it is a movement towards death is proved by the exhaustion felt after it; many people feel even a disgust....

The second reason is : the excitement accompanying the ordinary sexual act destroys the psychic possibilities of the man. He gets separated and dissociated from the higher centres of consciousness and goes downwards. People say that they take the attitude of Shakti taking Bhoga through them, but that is only a way of saying. People indulge in lower movements, yield to hostile forces and at the same time pass as yogis. Even, the Vedantic attitude is often made an excuse for yielding to the hostile forces. "All this is Maya, illusion, there is no virtue, no sin, no good, no evil," they say and give themselves up to lower vital forces.

Disciple : But are the lower movements of nature themselves not hostile ?

Sri Aurobindo : No, but they offer an opening to the hostile forces and the hostile forces use these lower movements for their own purpose.

Disciple : As regards the degrading effects of the sexual act, does marriage and legal sanction make any difference ?

Sri Aurobindo : Absolutely none. These moral injunctions are for the maintenance of society, for the welfare of the children born, but so far as the yogic life is concerned the sexual act with one's own wife is as much harmful as that with any other woman.

Evening Talk with Sri Aurobindo by A.B. Purani, pp.118-119

Transmutation of the sexual impulse

But all recognition of the sex principle, as apart from the gross physical indulgence of the sex impulse, could not be excluded from a divine life upon earth; it is there in life, plays a large part and has to be dealt with, it cannot simply be ignored, merely suppressed or held down or put away out of sight. In the first place, it is in one of its aspects a cosmic and even a divine principle: it takes the spiritual form of the Ishwara and the Shakti and without it there could be no world-creation or manifestation of the world-principle of Purusha and Prakriti which are both necessary for the creation, necessary too in their association and interchange for the play of its psychological working and in their manifestation as soul and Nature fundamental to the whole process of the Lila. In the divine life itself an incarnation or at least in some form a presence of the two powers or their initiating influence through their embodiments or representatives would be indispensable for making the new creation possible. In its human action on the mental and vital level sex is not altogether an undivine principle; it has its

nobler aspects and idealities and it has to be seen in what way and to what extent these can be admitted into the new and larger life. All gross animal indulgence of sex desire and impulse would have to be eliminated; it could only continue among those who are not ready for the higher life or not yet ready for a complete spiritual living. In all who aspired to it but could not yet take it up in its fullness sex will have to be refined, submit to the spiritual or psychic impulse and a control by the higher mind and the higher vital and shed all its lighter, frivolous or degraded forms and feel the touch of the purity of the ideal.

CWSA 13: 543-44

Sri Aurobindo

'Shakti' and the spiritual relation between man and woman

In the spiritual union the woman who is the Shakti must be really a Power – that is to say, a powerful personality who can receive the help from the Purusha in the proper way. Each must be of real help to the other : this relation is the most difficult to attain. These difficulties come to the Sadhaka. To the Siddha, the perfected soul, there is no difficulty. He knows fully well what is to be manifested. If his Shakti is there he knows where she is and he will get her.

Disciple : Is the Shakti necessary for the Supramental Yoga?

Sri Aurobindo : The Shakti is not necessary for the yoga : without the Shakti full knowledge, consciousness, and power and ananda can be attained. But if these elements are to be brought to and manifested in life then the Shakti is necessary. If there is no Shakti then he cannot bring down the Knowledge, Power, Ananda etc. that are in him into life. He can, in that case, only prepare the way for the work to be done at a future time.

Evening Talk with Sri Aurobindo by A.B. Purani,

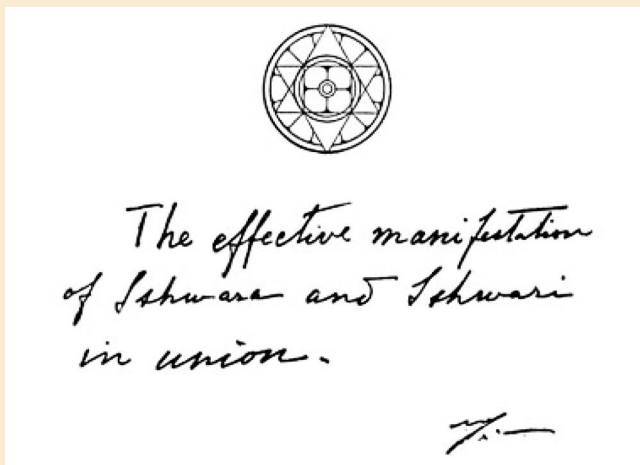
What most People call 'love' is a superficial thing and mostly

bound up with the vital craving of lust. That has to be completely rejected. There is a relation deeper than that : it is of the Soul. That relation comes from within by itself. It manifests itself in both as an ideal oneness – oneness in mind, oneness of the soul, oneness of self. That relation is Shanta, full of peace, wide, pure – *pavitra*. In it there is no trace of vital lust and physical craving. There is also possible a relation of Purusha and Shakti between man and woman. But that relation is not social, it is not ordinary. Because one is married to a certain woman it does not follow that his wife is necessarily his Shakti.

So long as these relations are not understood and experienced by you another possible relation is that of friends. That is to say, you ought to live with your wife just as you would with a friend who has the same aim of life, without any other relation than that of friendship.

Evening Talk with Sri Aurobindo by A.B. Purani, pp. 156–157

Symbol of the Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education



The effective manifestation of Ishwara and Ishwari in union.

God as Mother

Mother of God

The one original transcendent Shakti, the Mother stands above all the worlds and bears in her eternal consciousness the Supreme Divine. Alone, she harbours the absolute Power and the ineffable Presence; containing or calling the Truths that have to be manifested, she brings them down from the Mystery in which they were hidden into the light of her infinite consciousness and gives them a form of force in her omnipotent power and her boundless life and a body in the universe. The Supreme is manifest in her for ever as the everlasting Sachchidananda, manifested through her in the worlds as the one and dual consciousness of Ishwara-Shakti and the dual principle of Purusha-Prakriti, embodied by her in the Worlds and the Planes and the Gods and their Energies and figured because of her as all that is in the known worlds and in unknown others. All is her play with the Supreme; all is her manifestation of the mysteries of the Eternal, the miracles of the Infinite. All is she, for all are parcel and portion of the divine Conscious-Force. Nothing can be here or elsewhere but what she decides and the Supreme sanctions; nothing can take shape except what she moved by the Supreme perceives and forms after casting it into seed in her creating Ananda. The Mahashakti, the universal Mother, works out whatever is transmitted by her transcendent consciousness from the Supreme and enters into the worlds that she has made; her presence fills and supports them with the divine spirit and the divine all-sustaining force and delight without which they could not exist. That which we call Nature or Prakriti is only her most outward executive aspect; she marshals and arranges the harmony of her forces and processes, impels the operations of Nature and moves among them secret or manifest in all that can be seen or experienced or put into motion of life. Each of the worlds is nothing but one play of the Mahashakti of

that system of worlds or universe, who is there as the cosmic Soul and Personality of the transcendent Mother. Each is something that she has seen in her vision, gathered into her heart of beauty and power and created in her Ananda.....

The sacrifice of the Divine Mother

The Mother not only governs all from above but she descends into this lesser triple universe. Impersonally, all things here, even the movements of the Ignorance, are herself in veiled power and her creations in diminished substance, her Nature body and Nature-force, and they exist because, moved by the mysterious fiat of the Supreme to work out something that was there in the possibilities of the Infinite, she has consented to the great sacrifice and has put on like a mask the soul and forms of the Ignorance. But personally too she has stooped to descend here into the Darkness that she may lead it to the Light, into the Falsehood and Error that she may convert it to the Truth, into this Death that she may turn it to godlike Life, into this world-pain and its obstinate sorrow and suffering that she may end it in the transforming ecstasy of her sublime Ananda. In her deep and great love for her children she has consented to put on herself the cloak of this obscurity, condescended to bear the attacks and torturing influences of the powers of the Darkness and the Falsehood, borne to pass through the portals of the birth that is a death, taken upon herself the pangs and sorrows and sufferings of the creation, since it seemed that thus alone could it be lifted to the Light and Joy and Truth and eternal Life. This is the great sacrifice called sometimes the sacrifice of the Purusha, but much more deeply the holocaust of Prakriti, the sacrifice of the Divine Mother.

CWSA 32: 14-15, 17

Sri Aurobindo

Divine Shakti and the Divine Power

The divine Power is only a part of the divine Shakti; the divine

Power is an attribute of the divine Shakti. Sri Aurobindo uses the word divine Shakti, here, in the sense of *chit-tapas*, the creative power, the creative consciousness; consequently, the divine Power is only a part of the Shakti.

CWM 4: 357

The relation between the Divine Mother and Her aspects

Q: Sweet Mother, why is Mahasaraswati the youngest of the four?

Because her work came last; so she came last. (*Silence*) It is in this order that they manifested, in the order given here. These aspects are like the attributes of the Mother, which manifested in succession according to the necessities of the work; and the necessity of perfection was the last, so she is the youngest.

Q: But these four are independent of one another?

To a certain extent, but not totally. It is always the same thing. There is an independence which at times seems to be total, and at the same time a very close link and even one which is, so to say, absolute. The central consciousness, that is to say, here in the material world, is the Mahashakti, you know. Well, she always has the power to control the action of these different aspects—though they are quite independent and act according to their own aspirations. And yet she can control them, in the sense that if...

Take, for example, the instance of Kali. If Kali decides that she is going to intervene and the Mahashakti, who has naturally a much more total and general vision of things, sees that the moment for intervention is not opportune or that it is too soon, well, she can very easily put a pressure upon Mahakali and tell her, "Keep quiet." And the other is obliged to keep quiet; and yet she acts quite independently.

CWM 6: 289-90

The Mother



Kali Puja, 10.11.58

A being of wisdom, power and delight,
Even as a mother draws her child to her arms,
Took to her breast Nature and world and soul.

Savitri, 312

Sri Aurobindo

The steps and Planes of the Supreme Goddess, Mahashakti

All is created by the Supreme Goddess, the Supreme and Original Mahashakti, all proceeds from her, all lives by her, all lives in her, even as she lives in all. All wisdom and knowledge are her wisdom and knowledge; all power is her power, all will and force her will and force, all action is her action, all movement her movement. All beings are portions of her power of existence.

Seven times seven are the planes of the Supreme Goddess, the steps of ascent and descent of the Divine Transcendent and Universal Adyashakti. Above are the thrice seven supreme planes of Sat-Chit-Ananda, त्रिः सत्त्वं परमा पदानि मातुः; in between are the seven planes of the Divine Truth and Vastness, Mahad Brahma, सत्यमृतं बृहत्; below are the thrice seven steps of the ascent and descent into this evolutionary world of the earth existence.

These three gradations are successively Supermind or Truth-Mind, with its seven suns; Life with its seven Lotuses; Earth with its seven Jewel-Centres. The seven Lotuses are the seven chakras of the Tantric tradition, descending and ascending from Mind (Sahasradala, Ajna[,] Vishuddha, Anahata) that takes up Life through Life in Force (Manipura, Swadhisthana) down to Life involved in Matter ([Muladhara]).

All these Life-Centres are in themselves centres of Truth in Life even as the seven Suns are each a flaming heart of Truth in luminous Divine-Mind-Existence; but these lotuses have been veiled, closed, shut into their own occult energies by the Ignorance. Hence the obscurity, falsehood, death, suffering of our existence.

The Jewel-Centres of the Earth-Mother are seven luminous jewel-hearts of Truth in Substance; but they have been imprisoned in darkness, fossilised in immobility, veiled, closed, shut into their own occult energies by the hardness, darkness and inertia of the material Inconscience.

To liberate all these powers by the luminous and flaming descent of the suns of the Supermind and the release of the eighth Sun of

Truth hidden in the Earth, in the darkness of the Inconscience, in the cavern of Vala and his Panis, this is the first step towards the restoration of the Earth Mother to her own divinity and the earth-existence to its native light, truth, life and bliss of immaculate Ananda.

CWSA 10: 1339-40

The Mother's Force

The Mother's power and not any human endeavour and tapasya can alone rend the lid and tear the covering and shape the vessel and bring down into this world of obscurity and falsehood and death and suffering Truth and Light and Life divine and the immortal's Ananda.

CWSA 32: 26

Everyone who is turned to the Mother is doing my Yoga. It is a great mistake to suppose that one can "do" the Purna Yoga —i.e. carry out and fulfil all the sides of the Yoga by one's own effort. No human being can do that. What one has to do is to put oneself in the Mother's hands and open oneself to her by service, by bhakti, by aspiration; then the Mother by her light and force works in him so that the sadhana is done. It is a mistake also to have the ambition to be a big Purna Yogi or a supramental being and ask oneself how far have I got towards that. The right attitude is to be devoted and given to the Mother and to wish to be whatever she wants you to be. The rest is for the Mother to decide and do in you.

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When I speak of the Mother's force, I do not speak of the force of Prakriti which carries on things in the Ignorance but of the higher Force of the Divine that descends from above to transform the nature.

*

There are two ways of doing Yoga, one by knowledge and one's own efforts, the other by reliance on the Mother. In the last way

one has to offer one's mind and heart and all to the Mother for her Force to work on it, call her in all difficulties, have faith and bhakti. At first it takes time, often a long time, for the consciousness to be prepared in this way and during that time many difficulties can come up, but if one perseveres a time comes when all is ready, the Mother's Force opens the consciousness fully to the Divine, then all that must develop develops within, spiritual experience comes and with it the knowledge and union with the Divine.

*

What you feel streaming down must be the Mother's overhead Force. It flows usually from above the head and works at first in the mind centres (head and neck) and afterwards goes down into the chest and heart and then through the movement of the whole body.

It is the effect of this working which you must be feeling in the head up to the shoulders. The Force that comes down from above is the one that works to transform the consciousness into that of a higher spiritual being. Before that the Mother's Force works in the psychic, mental, vital and the physical plane itself to support, purify and psychically change the consciousness.

*

There are two or three kinds of descent. One is this touching the base of the centres which rest on the spinal cord. Another is through the head into the body going from level to level till the whole body is filled and opening all the centres of consciousness. Another is a descent enveloping the Adhar from outside.

*

... the pressure he feels on his head is the pressure of the Mother's force (the force of the higher consciousness) preparing an opening through the three upper centres (brahmarandhra, base of sahasradala; inner mind centre in the forehead; and the heart or psychic-emotional centre). The feeling in the spine is due to a very

slight flow of the current of the Shakti from above — the spine being the base of all the centres and the channel through which the Force tends most easily to flow from one centre to another (Sahasradala = the centre where the human or mental and the higher or spiritual consciousness meet).

*

The signs of ascent and descent of the Shakti

All is there in your description of this complex experience — all the signs of this first plunge. First, the sense of going a little deep down which was your feeling of the movement towards the inner depths; then, the stillness and pleasant numbness and the stiffness of the limbs. This was the Pressure of the consciousness retiring from the body inwards under the pressure of a force from above, — that pressure stabilising the body into an immobile support of the inner life in a kind of strong and still spontaneous asana. Next, the feeling of waves surging up, mounting to the head, almost, as you say, making you unconscious. This was the ascending of the lower consciousness in the adhara to meet the greater consciousness above. It is a movement analogous to that on which so much stress is laid in the Tantrik process, the awakening of the Kundalini, the Energy coiled up and latent in the body and its mounting through the spinal cord and the centres (chakras) and the Brahmaraandhra to meet the Divine above. But in our Yoga it is not a specialised process, but a spontaneous uprush of the whole lower consciousness in currents or waves (or otherwise) and on the other side a descent of the Divine Consciousness and its Force into the body. This descent is felt as a pouring in of calm and peace, of force and power, of light, of joy and ecstasy, of wideness and freedom and knowledge, of a Divine Being or a Presence — sometimes one of these, sometimes many of them or all together. The movement of ascension has different results: it may liberate the consciousness so that one feels no longer in the

body, but above it or else spread in wideness with the body either almost non-existent or only a point in one's free expanse; it may enable the being or some part of the being to go out from the body and move elsewhere, and this action is usually accompanied by some kind of Partial samadhi or else a complete trance; or it may result in empowering the consciousness, no longer limited by the body and the habits of the external nature, to go within, to enter the inner mental depths, the inner vital, the inner (subtle) physical, the psychic, to become conscious of its inmost psychic self or its inner mental, vital and subtle physical being and, it may be, to move and live in the domains, the planes, the worlds that correspond to these parts of the nature. This is what happened in your case. It is the repeated and constant ascent of the lower consciousness (not always translated by these signs) that enables the mind, the vital the physical to come into touch with the higher planes up to the supramental and get impregnated with their light and power and influence. And it is the repeated and constant descent of the Divine Consciousness and its Force that is the means for the transformation of the whole being and the whole nature. Once this descent becomes habitual, the Divine Force, the Power of the Mother begins to work, no longer from above only or from behind the veil, but consciously in the *adhDra* itself, and deals with its difficulties and possibilities and carries on the Yoga.

Letters to Dilip Kumar Roy, Vol. 1: 96–97

Q: What is the Yoga shakti? What is Yogic mind-force, Yogic life-force and Yogic body-force?

In the Yogic consciousness one is not only aware of things, but of forces, not only of forces, but of the conscious being behind the forces. One is aware of all this not only in oneself but in the universe. There is a force which accompanies the growth of this new consciousness and at once grows with it and helps it to come about

and to perfect itself. This force is the Yoga shakti. It is here asleep and coiled up in all the centres of our inner being (chakras) and is at the base what is called in the Tantras the Kundalini Shakti. But it is also above us, above our head as the Divine Force — not there coiled up, involved, asleep, but awake, scient, potent, extended and wide; it is there waiting for manifestation and to this Force we have to open ourselves — to the power of the Mother. In the mind it manifests itself as a divine mind-force or a universal mind-force and it can do everything that the personal mind cannot do; it is then the Yogic mind force. When it manifests and works in the vital or physical in the same way, it is then apparent as a Yogic life-force or a Yogic body-force. It can awake in all these forms, bursting outwards and upwards, extending itself into wideness from below; or it can descend and become there a definite power for things; it can pour downwards into the body, working, establishing its reign, extending into wideness from above, link the lowest in us with the highest above us, release the individual into a cosmic universality or into absoluteness and transcendence.

CWSA 32: 192

Sri Aurobindo

There is no method in this Yoga except to concentrate, preferably in the heart, and call the presence and power of the Mother to take up the being and by the workings of her force transform the consciousness; one can concentrate also in the head or between the eyebrows, but for many this is a too difficult opening. When the mind falls quiet and the concentration becomes strong and the aspiration intense, then there is a beginning of experience. The more the faith, the more rapid the result is likely to be. For the rest one must not depend on one's own efforts only, but succeed in establishing a contact with the Divine and a receptivity to the Mother's Power and Presence.

CWSA 29: 107

Sri Aurobindo

The Way of the Infinite Shakti

Need of Faith in the Shakti and Her workings

There must be faith in the love & wisdom of God fulfilling Himself through us, fulfilling the Yogasiddhi, fulfilling our life work, working out all for our good even when it is apparently veiled in evil; and there must be faith in the power of the Shakti manifested by Him in this adhDra to sustain, work out and fulfil the divine knowledge, power & joy in the Yoga and in the life. Without sraddha there is no shakti; imperfect sraddha means imperfect shakti. Imperfection may be either in the force of the faith or in its illumination. It is sufficient at first to have full force of the faith, for we cannot from the beginning of the Yoga have full illumination. Then, however we err & stumble, our force of faith will sustain us. When we cannot see, we shall know that God withholds the light, imposing on us error as a step towards knowledge, just as He imposes on us defeat as a step towards victory.

CWSA 11: 13

Artificial paths and the freedom of the Infinite

It is a tremendous work that is being done in you, the alteration of your whole human nature into a divine nature, the crowding of centuries of evolution into a few years. You ought not to grudge the time. There are other paths that offer more immediate results or at any rate, by offering you some definite *kriya* you can work at yourself, give your *adhDra* the satisfaction of feeling that you are doing something, so many more *pradnyamas* today, so much longer a time for the *Dsana*, so many more repetitions of the *japa*, so much done, so much definite progress marked. But once you have chosen this path, you must cleave to it. Those are human methods, not the way that the infinite Shakti works, which moves silently, sometimes imperceptibly to its goal, advances here, seems to pause there, then mightily and triumphantly re-

veals the grandiose thing that it has done. Artificial paths are like canals hewn by the intelligence of man; you travel easily, safely, surely, but from one given place to another. This path is the broad and trackless ocean by which you can travel widely to all parts of the world and are admitted to the freedom of the infinite. All that you need are the ship, the steering-wheel, the compass, the motive-power and a skilful captain. Your ship is the Brahmavidya, faith is your steering-wheel, self-surrender your compass, the motive power is she who makes, directs and destroys the worlds at God's command and God himself is your captain. But he has his own way of working and his own time for everything.

CWSA 13: 87-88

The key word of Supramental Yoga is self-surrender

The supramental Yoga is at once an ascent of the soul towards God and a descent of the Godhead into the embodied nature.

The ascent demands a one-centred all-gathering aspiration of soul and mind and life and body upward, the descent a call of the whole being towards the infinite and eternal Divine. If this call and this aspiration are there and if they grow constantly and seize all the nature, then and then only its supramental transformation becomes possible.

There must be an opening and surrender of the whole nature to receive and enter into a greater divine consciousness which is there already above, behind and englobing this mortal half-conscious existence. There must be too an increasing capacity to bear an ever stronger and more insistent action of the divine Force, till the soul has become a child in the hands of the infinite Mother. All other means known to other Yoga can be used and are from time to time used as subordinate processes in this Yoga too, but they are impotent without these greater conditions, and, once these are there, they are not indispensable. In the end it will be found that this Yoga cannot be carried through to its end by any effort of

mind, life and body, any human psychological or physical process but only by the action of the supreme Shakti. But her way is at once too mysteriously direct and outwardly intricate, too great, too complete and subtle to be comprehensively followed, much more to be cut out and defined into a formula by our human intelligence.

Man cannot by his own effort make himself more than man, but he can call down the divine Truth and its power to work in him. A descent of the Divine Nature can alone divinise the human receptacle. Self-surrender to a supreme transmuting Power is the key-word of the Yoga.

CWSA 12: 364–65

The Action of the Divine Shakti

The Shakti, the power of the Infinite and the Eternal descends within us, works, breaks up our present psychological formations, shatters every wall, widens, liberates, presents us with always newer and greater powers of vision, ideation, perception and newer and greater life-motives, enlarges and new models increasingly the soul and its instruments, confronts us with every imperfection in order to convict and destroy it, opens to a greater perfection, does in a brief period the work of many lives or ages so that new births and new vistas open constantly within us. Expansive in her action, she frees the consciousness from confinement in the body; it can go out in trance or sleep or even waking and enter into worlds or other regions of this world and act there or carry back its experience. It spreads out, feeling the body only as a small part of itself, and begins to contain what before contained it; it achieves the cosmic consciousness and extends itself to be commensurate with the universe. It begins to know inwardly and directly and not merely by external observation and contact the forces at play in the world, feels their movement, distinguishes their functioning and can operate im-

mediately upon them as the scientist operates upon physical forces, accept their action and results in our mind, life, body or reject them or modify, change, reshape, create immense new powers and movements in place of the old small functionings of the nature. We begin to perceive the working of the forces of universal Mind and to know how our thoughts are created by that working, separate from within the truth and falsehood of our perceptions, enlarge their field, extend and illumine their significance, become master of our own minds and active to shape the movements of Mind in the world around us. We begin to perceive the flow and surge of the universal life forces, correct the origin and law of our feelings, emotions, sensations, passions, are free to accept, reject, new-create, open to wider, rise to higher planes of Life-Power. We begin to perceive too the key to the enigma of Matter, follow the interplay of Mind and Life and Consciousness upon it, discover more and more its instrumental and resultant function and detect ultimately the last secret of Matter as a form not merely of Energy but of involved and arrested or unstably fixed and restricted consciousness and begin to see too the possibility of its liberation and plasticity of response to higher Powers, its possibilities for the conscious and no longer the more than half-inconscient incarnation and self-expression of the Spirit. All this and more becomes more and more possible as the working of the Divine Shakti increases in us and, against much resistance or labour to respond of our obscure consciousness, through much struggle and movement of progress and regression and renewed progress necessitated by the work of intensive transformation of a half-inconscient into a conscious substance, moves to a greater purity, truth, height, range. All depends on the psychic awakening in us, the completeness of our response to her and our growing surrender.

CWSA 23: 183-84

Become the child new born from the mother

The soul, the psychic being is in direct touch with the divine Truth, but it is hidden in man by the mind, the vital being and the physical nature. One may practise yoga and get illuminations in the mind and the reason; one may conquer power and luxuriate in all kinds of experiences in the vital; one may establish even surprising physical Siddhis; but if the true soul-power behind does not manifest, if the psychic nature does not come into the front, nothing genuine has been done. In this yoga the psychic being is that which opens the rest of the nature to the true supramental light and finally to the supreme Ananda. Mind can open by itself to its own higher reaches; it can still itself and widen into the Impersonal; it may too spiritualise itself in some kind of static liberation or Nirvana; but the supramental cannot find a sufficient base in a spiritualised mind alone. If the inmost soul is awakened, if there is a new birth out of the mere mental, vital and physical into the psychic consciousness, then this yoga can be done; otherwise (by the sole power of the mind or any other part) it is impossible.... If there is a refusal of the psychic new birth, a refusal to become the child new born from the Mother, owing to attachment to intellectual knowledge or mental ideas or to some vital desire, then there will be a failure in the sadhana.

SABCL 24: 1095, CWSA 30: 337-38

Sri Aurobindo

There are two cosmic Forces — one the higher Cosmic Shakti which is a form of the Mother, the other a Power of the Ignorance. You have not to open to the latter, only to the Mother.

CWSA 32: 225

Sri Aurobindo

A Note of Clarifications by the Editor All India Magazine

We wish to issue the following clarifications for our readers some of whom may not be fully acquainted with regard to the process of selection of passages for the AIM (All India Magazine):

The subtitles are by the editor. We largely take passages from the Collected Works of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother. For ease of understanding we try to take as many passages from the Mother's works as possible.

We also take short passages from various compilations culled out from the Mother's Agenda. But for the sake of simplicity and the ease of cross-reference for those who may like to go in for a deeper and completer reading, we mark the references as 'Conversations with a disciple' and give the date as it appears in the Mother's Agenda.

To complete the picture we also rely upon certain works where Sri Aurobindo's and the Mother's words have been noted by memory. Prominent among these are 'Evening Talks', books by Mona Sarkar, books by Huta, 'Champaklal Speaks' and 'Reminiscences of disciples'. We do not wish to go into the debate regarding the full authenticity of these works and leave it to the reader to use his sensibility or do his own research. We however trust that those books which are published by the Sri Aurobindo Ashram, such as 'the Supreme', 'Luminous Notes', 'Blessings of the Grace' or books by Huta need not be questioned about their veracity. There should be no major problems with exact remembrance of words so long as the general drift is in tune with the rest of Their writings and the subject is not a controversial one. The scholars, pedagogues and others are free to interpret and investigate or analyse and scrutinize. Our aims are simpler and modest. We select passages that we feel are important and interesting and complete the picture or add to what is already there in essence in the Collected Works. The purpose is to bathe the readers in the wonderful atmosphere generated through

Sri Aurobindo and the Mother's words and breathe in Their light and delight. Read with a receptive quietude these words can act like a magical key leading us inwards towards a deeper perception and experience of the states of Consciousness they embody. Thus alone can a truer understanding dawn upon us and not by taking a word or two or half a passage from here and there and trying to analyse it out of context. Towards this end we would like to draw our attention to the following words of the Mother Herself:

Q: You put something in Your words which enables us to see the Truth that words cannot convey. What is it that accompanies Your words?

Consciousness.

27 December 1967

*

When I speak, I live what I say and I communicate the experience together with the words — no machine can record that. That is why the text seems completely different when it is heard or read, the main thing has gone, for it is beyond all notation. Even when what I have written myself is printed in a book or an article, the intensity of the experience I had while writing it escapes, and the text seems flat, although the words are identical.

This is the real reason for the physical Presence, its incontestable importance.

*

Do not take my words for a teaching. Always they are a force in action, uttered with a definite purpose, and they lose their true power when separated from that purpose.

CWM 13: 53

The Mother

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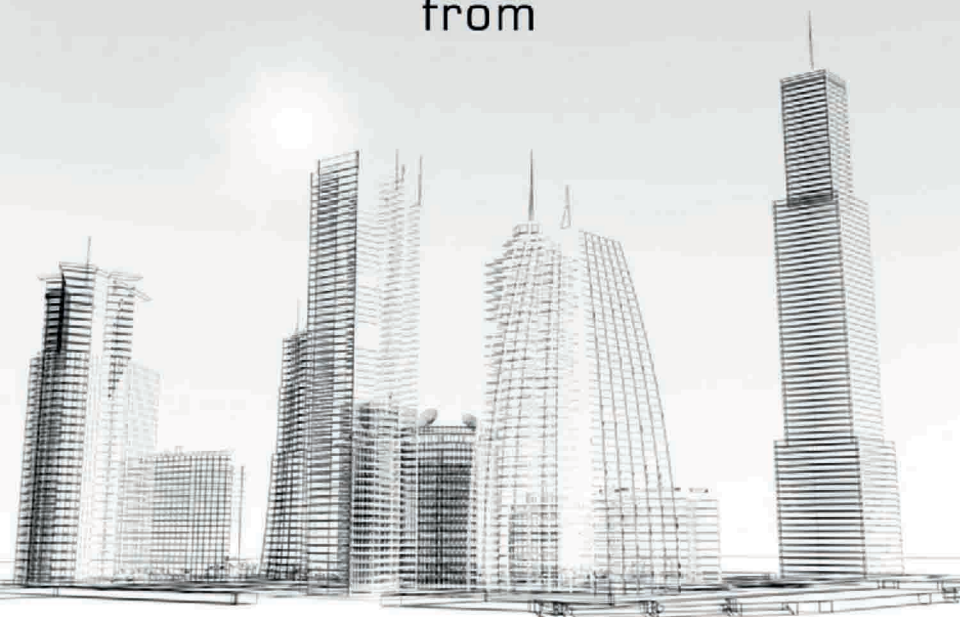
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